

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 H-03 SS-07 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SSO-00

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O 171050Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO AMEMBASSY RANGOON NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6880

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1982

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US, TH

SUBJECT: CODEL MANSFIELD VISIT TO LAOS

SUMMARY: CODEL MANSFIELD MET WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER KHAMPHAY BOUPHA FOR OVER AN HOUR AND LUNCHEDED WITH WORKING LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATS, UN REPS AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS BEFORE DEPARTING FOR RANGOON. IN CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER, SENATOR STRESSED US DESIRE FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH LAOS. KHAMPHAY SAID THAT LAO TOO SHARED THIS OBJECTIVE BUT REMAINED SUSPICIOUS ABOUT CIA SUPPORT OF "REACTIONARY TRAITORS" INFILTRATING BACK INTO LAOS. SENATOR ASSURED KHAMPHAY THAT COE NOT INVOLVED, ASKED FOR ANY EVIDENCE THAT US WAS INVOLVED, AND STATED THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REMOVE SUSPICIONS IN ORDER FOR TWO COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. SENATOR ALSO ASKED IF LAO HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT MIA TO GIVE THEIR FAMILIES. MINISTER SAID THAT AT END OF WAR LAOS HAD RETURNED ALL AMERICANS THEY HELD, AND GOVERNMENT HAD ORDERED PEOPLE IN ALL LOCATIONS TO REPORT IF THEY FOUND SIGNS OF DDAD PILOTS WHICH WOULD BE PASSED TO US OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

1. SENATOR MANSFIELD CALLED ON ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER KHAMPHAY BOUPHA IN HIS OFFICE AT FOREIGN MINISTRY. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION, UNCLEARED BY SENATOR, WHO LEFT VIENTIANE FOR RANGOON AND ASKED THAT TELEGRAM BE SENT HIM THERE.

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2. SENATOR MANSFIELD OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR LAO INVITATION TO VISIT AND AUTHORIZATION FOR PLANE TO LAND, WHICH NECESSARY BECAUSE OF HIS SHORT TIME SCHEDULE.

3. KHAMPHAY RESPONDED THAT HE WAS HAPPY WITH CODEL VISIT. HE STATED THAT AFTER PREVIOUS AMERICAN INTERFERENCE IN LAOS AND USE OF BASES IN THAILAND TO ATTACK LAOS, SITUATION HAD EASED AND LPDR HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN DECEMBER, 1975. LAO GOVERNMENT WANTED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. ON BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. LAO BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT CIA WAS STILL SUPPORTING LAO "REACTIONARY TRAITORS" IN THAILAND WHO OFTEN CROSSED BORDER TO COMMIT SABOTAGE IN LAOS. AS PRIMIN KAYSONE HAD STATED IN JUNE 12 SPEECH, IF U.S. DID NOT STOP SUPPORTING REACTIONARIES, RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES COULD NOT IMPROVE.

4. SENATOR REPLIED THAT HE KNEW OF NO SUCH SUPPORT BEING GIVEN BY CIA OR OTHER USG AGENCIES. ALMOST ALL U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THAILAND AND AIRFIELD USED BY U.S.HNAVE REVERTED TO THAI CONTROL.

5. KHAMPAY SAID THAT THAI PRESS AND RADIO REPORTED CIA INVOLVEMENT WITH LAO REACTIONARIES. SENATOR RBT LIED THAT HE HAD INQUIRED AT EMBASSY IN BANGKOK ABOUT CIA ACTIVITIES AND WAS ASSURED THAT IT WAS CARRYING OUT NO COVERT OR OVERT OPERATIONS IN THAILAND. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS MEMBER OF NEWLY FORMED SENATE COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE CIA AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND DID NOT THINK EMBASSY BANGKOK WOULD HAVE LIED TO HIM BECAUSE IF IT DID AND HE FOUND OUT IT WOULD BE TOO BAD. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT MINISTER WAS UNDULY SUSPICIOUS AND WAS THINKING ABOUT PAST, NOT PRESENT, U.S. ACTIVITIES. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY HAD ENTERED A NEWHURA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. PERSONALLY, HE WANTED TO SEE, GIVEN THE RIGHT CONDITIONS, A RETURN TO NORMAL U.S. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH LAOS, CAMBODIA AND VIET-NAM.

6. MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE ADMIRERED MANSFIELD AND HOPED THAT BECAUSE OF HIS POSITION HE WOULD BE ABLE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN LAOS AND THE U.S. HE STATED THAT LAOS HAD TWO OBJECTIVES IN REGARD TO RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. FIRST, STOP CONFIDENTIAL

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CIA SUPPORT TO THE REACTIONARY TRAITORS. HE SAID THAT THE LAO PEOPLE FORGOT THE PAST EASILY, BUT THAT THEY HAD SUFFERED TWENTY YEARS OF DESTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRY WITH BOMBS FALLING ON THEIR HOMES. A HALF MILLION PEOPLE HAD BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES, 100,000 HAD DIED, AND TENS OF THOUSAND WERE WOUNDED. THE LAO OBJECTIVE NOW WAS TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO MAKE THEIR LIVING PEACEFULLY AGAIN. THEREFORE, SECONDLY, LAOS WANTED U.S. HELP TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR.

7. SENATOR RESPONDED THAT HE WAS SURE THE MINISTER WAS AWARE OF HIS PREVIOUS VIEWS ON INDOCHINA WAR. AS FOR U.S. SUPPORT TO REACTIONARIES, IF MINISTER HAD SPECIFIC CASES TO CITE, HE SHOULD NAME NAMES AND PRESENT FACTS ABOUT U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND AFFECTING LAOS AND PROVIDE THEM TO CHARGE AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE IN LAOS. SENATOR ASSURED MINISTER UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT HE WOULD INVESTIGATE ANY SPECIFICS WHICH WERE PROVIDED. IF CHARGES PROVEN GROUNDLESS WE WOULD INFORM MINISTER, BUT IF PROVEN CORRECT WE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO STOP ACTIVITIES.

8. MINISTER RPLIED THAT THERE WERE MANY KNOWN EXAMPLES OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR ANTI-LAO ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND. FOR INSTANCE, THE THAI POPULACE IN UDORN HAD PROTESTED AGAINST THE IMPROVEMENT OF LAO-THAI RELATIONS. THERE WERE ALSO STORIES IN THE PRESS ABOUT CIA INVOLVEMENT.

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 H-03 NSC-06 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-07

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O 171050Z AUG 76
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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6881

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1982

9. THE SENATOR RESPONDED BY ASKING WHY THE PEOPLE OF UDORN HAD PROTESTED AGAINST LAOS. KHAMPHAY ANSWERED THAT THERE WERE MANY THAI POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOME HAD DEMONSTRATED TO HAVE U.S. BASES REMAIN IN THAILAND WHILE OTHERS HAD DEMONSTRATED TO HAVE THEM LEAVE.

10. SENATOR MANSFIELD SAID IN HIS VIEW IT WOULD BE BEST TO FORGET FORGET THE PAST BECAUSE IF WE KEPT LOOKING BACKWARD IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONS. BOTH COUNTRIES SHOULD BASE THEIR RELATIONS ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT FOR

EQUAL STATUS, AND LACK OF SUSPICION. AS LONG AS SUSPICIONS
PERSISTED IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS.

11. KHAMPHAY THEN REITERATED THAT THE LAO STILL HAD DOUBTS
FIRST ABOUT CIA SUPPORT FOR THE REACTIONARIES AND SECOND ABOUT A
U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR, AS THE U.S. HAD
PROMISED. IT WAS UP TO THE U.S. TO MAKE THESE SUSPICIONS
DISAPPEAR WHICH WOULD ALLOW U.S. RELATIONS WITH LAOS NOT ONLY TO
BE AS GOOD AS THEY WERE BEFORE BUT EVEN BETTER.

12. SENATOR MANSFIELD SAID THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT
CONTROL WHAT SOME THAI DO OR WRITE, AND THAT THE U.S. IS
OFTEN BLAMED FOR WHAT OTHERS DO.

13. THE MINISTER AGAIN STATED THAT IT WAS TRUE THAT CIA SUPPORTED
THE REACTIONARIES. SENATOR MANSFIELD SAID THAT CIA HAD RECENTLY
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COME UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE CONGRESS, THAT THE SENATRE
HAD SET UP AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, AND THAT THE CIA
WAS NOW UNDER STRICT OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESS, WHICH WAS AN
IMPROVEMENT OVER THE SITUATION WHICH EXISTED PREVIOUSLY. HE
ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT PLACE ANY CREDENCE IN WHAT THE THAI
PAPERS REPORTED OR IN WHAT SOME THAI DID IN BANGKOK OR UDORN.
THIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE USG OR WITH ANY OF ITS AGENCIES.
HE ASSURED THE MINISTER THAT HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO REMOVE
SUSPICIONS ABOUT U.S. INVOLVEMENT, IF THESE WERE UNFOUNDED, AND
HOPED THAT THE MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD DO THE SAME.

14. THE MINISTER THEN SAID THAT THE LAO HAD GOOD INTENTIONS
TOWARD THE U.S. BUT THAT THEY HAD NO WAY OF MAKING THEIR
SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE U.S. DISAPPEAR AND HOPED THAT SENATOR
MANSFIELD WOULD REMOVE THE CAUSE OF THESE. HE CHARGED THAT THE
SPECIAL FORCES OF VANG PAO SUPPORTED BY THE CIA HAD GONE TO
THAILAND AND SOME OF THEM HAD RETURNED TO CREATE TROUBLE IN LAOS.
VANG PAO HAD SENT SOME OFFICERS BACK TO COMMAND THESE FORCES.
THE MINISTER ASKED WHERE VANG PAO WAS AT PRESENT.

15. THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE WAS THE RIGHT PERSON TO ADDRESS
THIS QUESTION TO BECAUSE VANG PAO HAD BEEN LIVING IN THE SENATOR'S
HOME TOWN IN MONTANA FOR THE PAST YEAR OR TWO, HIS PRESENCE THERE
HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS, AND HE HAD NOT BEEN ENGAGED IN ANY
SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITES. THE SENATOR ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD NOT
SEEN VANG PAO BUT HAD READ ABOUT HIS PRESENCE IN THE PAPERS.

16. THE SENATOR THEN RAISED THE MIA ISSUE, STATING THAT A
NUMBER OF AMERICAN PLANES HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN IN LAOS AND THAT
THE FAMILIES OF THE MIAS WANTED TO KNOW WHETHR THEIR SONS OR
BROTHERS WERE STILL ALIVE. HE ASKED IF THE MINISTER FELT FREE
TO PROVIDE HIM ANY DEFINITE INFORMATION IN THIS REGARD.

17. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT THE LAO HAD A LONG TRADITION OF ADHERING TO HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES. AT THE END OF THE WAR, THE LAO HAD SENT BACK ALL THE CAPTURED AMERICANS. AS FOR THE PLANES WHICH HAD CRASHED AND PILOTS WHO WERE DEAD, THE LAO GOVERNMENT HAD ORDERED THE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO LOOK FOR DEAD PILOTS AND PROMISED TO PASS ON TO U.S. OFFICIALS ANY INFORMATION IT OBTAINED. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FOUR FIFTHS OF THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN DAMAGED DURING THE WAR AND THE PEOPLE HAD

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BEEN FORCED TO FLEE, IMPLYING THAT THIS WOULD MAKE THE SEARCH FOR MIAS DIFFICULT.

18. SENATOR MANSFIELD EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE MINISTER'S TIME AND COURTESIES AND FOR ALLOWING HIM TO RETURN TO LAOS, FOR WHICH HE HAD A WARM SPOT IN HIS HEART. HE HOPED THAT THE CONVERSATION WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AND THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD DO THEIR BEST TO CLEAR AWAY SUSPICION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

19. AS SENATOR MANSFIELD WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE, KHAMPHAY ASKED HIM FOR A STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD LAOS AND INDOCHINA IN GENERAL. THE SENATOR REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE MAJOR CHANGES IN U.S. POLICY BEFORE THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS BECAUSE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WERE DEVOTING THEIR ENERGIES TO THE ELECTIONS AND THIS WAS A PERIOD WHEN MAJOR DECISIONS WERE USUALLY PUT OFF. AFTER THE ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT, THE USG WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO MAKE CERTAIN DECISIONS IT WOULD BE FACED WITH, AND U.S. POLICY WOULD BE MORE CLEARLY DEFINED IN CERTAIN AREAS SUCH AS SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PRC. IN FUTURE YEARS THE U.S. WOULD BECOME MORE INTENSELY INTERESTED IN ASIA, PARTICULARLY SOUTHEAST ASIA, IN THE FIELDS OF PERSONAL CONTACTS, ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL TIES, AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS. THE U.S. HAD FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS NOT AN ASIAN POWER, AND THE ASIAN COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE TO SETTLE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS AMONG THEMSELVES. THE U.S., HOWEVER, REMAINED A PACIFIC POWER WHICH WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE PACIFIC BUT NOT IN THE MAINLAND OF ASIA. THE U.S., HOWEVER, LOOKED FORWARD TO GOOD RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE BETWEEN ITSELF AND COUNTRIES OF THE AREA.

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To: RANGOON
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